

The Role of Women – Matt Chandler

I wish I could start with the role of men, I believe much of the reason that women today are so leery of Male-headship is because of the almost absolute failure of evangelical men to be the nail-pierced servants of their wives. Then, there is the cultural debate, but part of the problem is also the curse of Genesis 3:16.

I believe that the Bible teaches that men and women have equality in essence (equal in dignity, value, essence and human nature) but also distinction in role:

1. Genesis 1:26-27- shows that man and woman share the same nature. They are both in God's image, both given the commission to rule the earth.
2. Galatians 3:28- God's redemption of those He will save involves no distinction between male and female.
3. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11- God distributes to His people gifts without regard to their sex
4. 1 Peter 3:7 – Women are fellow-heirs with Christ, with men

I. Biblical Evidences that God's Design was for Male/Female Role Differentiation

- a) Genesis 2- four features in this chapter that support headship before the fall.
 - 1) The order of creation indicates God's design of male priority in the male/female relationship. (Paul-1 Cor. 11:8, 1 Tim. 2:13)
 - 2) God gives instruction to Adam not to eat the fruit, before Eve's creation. Implied in this is Adam's responsibility to teach and protect his wife from violating the Lord's will.
 - 3) Eve was called Adam's helper- It is true that this same word is often used of God "helping" people. It is clear that Paul understands Eve's view of Helper to mean she is to have male headship.
 - 4) Adam's naming of Eve (Before and after the fall) (Genesis 2:23, 3:20)
- b) Genesis 3:1-7
 - 1) Eve sinned first
 - 2) God seeks Adam as being ultimately responsible (3:8)
 - 3) Paul clearly teaches that Adam is responsible for the sin that got us in this mess. (Romans 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:22)
 - 4) Paul knew Eve sinned first (1 Tim. 2:14)
- c) Genesis 3:16
 - 1) This produces a perversion in the Male/female relationship
 - 2) History has proven it true
- d) 1 Corinthians 11:1-16
 - 1) Paul links a woman's submissive role in church to God's created design
 - 2) The home cannot operate differently than the church, they are the same picture to God (the Bride of Christ)
- e) 1 Corinthians 14:34-36
 - 1) Clearly this prohibition on woman teaching cannot be absolute.(1 Cor. 11:5)

- 2) Regarding disagreements this text is talking about honoring ones husband
- f) 1 Timothy 2:8-15
 - 1) Paul here states that women are not to have authority over a man, but should receive instruction with submissiveness
 - 2) The word authority is the key here. What constitutes authority?
 - 3) Does male headship provide a covering of authority?
- g) Ephesians 5: 22-33
 - 1) A parallel here between the headship of the man over his wife and the headship of Christ over the church.
 - 2) As the church submits to Christ, so a woman should submit to her husband.
 - 3) How does the church submit to Christ?
- h) 1 Peter 3:7

Two things are clear here:

 - 1) While the woman is fully equal in essence
 - 2) Man bears a particular God-sanctioned responsibility to care for and lead his wife.
- i) Trinitarian Analogy
 - 1) God is one in essence and three in person
 - 2) The three persons of the Godhead are absolutely equal in essence, but they are distinct in function
 - 3) The distinction in function is best seen in Christ being subject to the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3) and the Spirit to the Son (Matthew 28).

II. Biblical Examples of Male/Female Role Differentiation

- Despite the fact that sin has produced in women an illegitimate desire to usurp the rightful authority God gave to man (Genesis 3). God has worked in Israel and in the church to establish male-headship as the consistent and approved pattern for religious and home life.
- a) Male Leadership in Israel
 - 1) From the garden on, God called out men and held them responsible for religious leadership
 - 2) Adam, Noah, 12 sons of Jacob as the 12 tribes of Israel, Male priestly order, prophets.
 - b) Male Leadership with Christ
 - 1) Jesus was not averse to challenging customs and traditions that ran contrary to the Kingdom of God. He attacked often the humanly fabricated restrictions put on people. (Matthew 15:3-9, 23:1-36)
 - 2) His taking women with Him during His travels is a testimony of this.
 - 3) But what Jesus never did, though he clearly could have, was choose a woman to be among the twelve.
 - c) Male leadership in the Church
 - 1) As observed above, the Bible restricts women from certain places of leadership and instruction in the church

- 2) 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, 14; 34-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 consistently require that the church's ultimate human spiritual leadership be gender-specific not based on ability but on God's designation.
- 3) This is further evidenced in the qualification passages concerning Elders (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6). That they must be the HUSBAND of one wife.
- d) Male leadership in the Home.
 - 1) Discussed above
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:1-7 furthers it by saying even if your husband is disobedient. Submit that he might be won.

III. Objections.

- a) You have left out the many significant examples of female leadership in Israel, in the gospels, and in the early church. It is simply not correct to say that the Bible exhibits a uniformed pattern of religious male leadership

Response: *Yes, women do play significant religious and at times leadership roles throughout the Bible. But two things to consider: 1) Most of the examples of female leadership appear in roles other than those of the highest religious authority. That is, there are some prophetesses, and female teachers in the Old and New Testaments, but where are there any women priests, woman heads of tribes of Israel, woman kings (Athaliah wrongly usurped the throne), woman apostles (Junia of Romans 16 is highly disputed,) women elders in the church? The point is that at the highest level of human religious authority, the Bible gives a clear and consistent picture of male leadership.*

What about Deborah? *Given the state of Israel at the time, most see Judges not as illustrating well God's Ideal for His people. Quite probably, then, Deborah's judgeship demonstrates, not how God endorses female leadership, but rather just how far from God's designed purposes Israel had strayed. In any case, it is difficult to accept Deborah's position as normative, in light of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.*

- b) Doesn't the Bible teach mutual submission? How can there be a hierarchy if there is mutual submission?

Response: *Yes, the Bible does say that we should walk in mutual submission to each other. This does not, however, remove male headship. The male submits to his wife by loving her like Christ loves the Church regardless of how he feels or how she acts. The wife submits to the husband by willingly submitting to her husband's headship through respect and obedience. This is Biblical mutual submission*

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and sin inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husband's leadership.
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious, or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism, with countless lost people in societies that have heard the gospel, with the stresses and

miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, churches, and the culture at large.